

Preparing For the Move Into Long-Term Care; "A Checklist"

The application for long-term care has been completed. This move will be a major change in your family member's surroundings. The following Checklist will help you plan the next steps to take in moving your family member to their new home. The checklist provides you with a number of practical tips and things to consider to help you prepare.

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1. While Waiting For The Bed Offer:

Experience has shown that preparation during this period of waiting can greatly reduce your stress and that of your family member at the time of the move. Preparation now will free you up your time later to help your loved one cope with the changes related to the move.

Complete a Life Story:

The Alzheimer Society's "Personal Care Book", can help you list the likes, dislikes, accomplishments, major life events (happy and sad), and treasured memories of your family member. **This is one of the most important things you can do to help the staff in your new long-term care home get to know your family member better. You may wish to write more than the space allowed for in the book. This life story will help the Care Team (which consists of all the staff who are involved in the care of your family member) better understand your family member's behaviour.**

A life story is like a biography. It can be simple or detailed, depending on the time and energy you have, as well as the amount of help you have from other people to work on it. A life story explains the characteristics and experiences that make a person who they are today.

Build a Circle of Support People:

Preparing to move a family member to a long term care home is never easy. It is important to choose some people you can talk to about your feelings, your concerns and your fears. Even if you have family or friends to talk to, you can join in a support group through the Alzheimer Society where you can meet other people caring for someone with Alzheimer Disease. Experience has shown that caring for yourself as a caregiver is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family member. This move is especially difficult, since you must be constantly prepared because you don't usually know when the offer of a bed will come.

Here are some practical suggestions for things you can do during this period of waiting:

Use a journal to write down your questions and concerns as they come to you. This way, you can ask your questions of the people who are able to answer them. Experience has shown that the more you can find out ahead of time, the easier you will be able to adjust to the changes.

Adapted with permission from the Partnership in Transitional Care; Transition Checklist Project of the Alzheimer Society of Ottawa, in collaboration with other Community Partners. 14

- Find out whether the selected home(s) have a buddy system which can connect you with a family member who has already been through a move. Identify a person you would like to accompany you during the move.

- Make a list of mail to be re-directed to the new address, and of utilities that may need to be cancelled after the move. Identify who will be responsible to take care of these changes.

- Pre-arrange a transportation plan for the day of the move and decide who can help you.

Get to know the selected long-term care home(s):

- Ask for a schedule of activities and guidelines for visiting so that you get to know the surroundings, routine and the Care Team.
 - Find out about electrical outlets, cable, and telephone access in resident rooms.
 - Ask if there are rules about bringing food or drinks when you visit.
 - Ask the long-term care home for a list of items that your family member can bring to help you prepare a list of their belongings to label and bring on the day of the move. Items to bring could include: clothes, shoes, toiletries, bedspread, furnishings, assistive devices, favorite photos, pets or wall hangings. Find out if the home prefers to put their own label on clothing, since it may be that their labels will stay on in the heavy-duty washers and dryers. Find out if there is a special and secure place for precious belongings such as photographs and mementos associated with special and joyful memories. Make copies of original photographs.
 - Start to plan how you will move personal belongings to the long-term care home.
 - Ask about storage space for seasonal clothing.
 - Make a list of assistive devices that your family member uses and will be taking with them (wheelchair, walker, cane, glasses, hearing aid, dentures and current medications)
 - Decide what to do with items that are not being taken to the long-term care home.
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Legal and Financial Things to Think About:

Your family member may qualify for a government subsidy to cover the cost for basic accommodation. Ask the Director of Care or Administrator of the home about this.

Complete and gather together all important documents:

- Power of Attorney for Property – This legal document appoints a person who can make financial decisions for you now, or in the future, if you are unable to make these decisions yourself.

- Power of Attorney for Personal Care – This is a legal document that appoints a person who can make decisions about your personal care (for example, medical treatment, where you live)

- Think about the kind of care or level of treatment your family member would want to receive. You will be asked about this on the day of admission, so you will want to think about it ahead of time and talk to others, if these choices have not already been made by your family member in the body of their Power of Attorney for Personal Care or with a ‘living will’. You may be asked to make decisions about care for your relative and these decisions will be based on what you know your relative would want or what would be in his or her best interests. These decisions are called “advance care choices” or “advance directives”. Speak to the physician if you are not clear about what these choices. Talk to your family, close friends and the attending physician about advance care choices.

- Health Card, Banking Information, Personal identification, checkbook

- Insurance benefit information or veterans benefit information that may cover additional services.

- Locate Notice of Assessment from Revenue Canada if your family member is applying for basic accommodation. Please take this with you on the day of admission to the home.

- Set money aside for the first month’s accommodation and inquire about the cost of extra services (telephone, cable, hair care, assistive devices etc.)

- Prepare change of address notices for the bank, Revenue Canada, your pension, physician, place of worship, friends and family.

Involuntary Separation - When couples must live in separate locations, the spouse in the community may have financial difficulties. Involuntary separation is only for people who receive GIS (Guaranteed Income Supplement) benefits or those who do not receive GIS because of CPP income. Applying for Involuntary Separation may increase your own or your spouse's GIS benefits. You can get an application from the Human Resources Development Canada office or from the long term care home.

2. The Call Comes and You Accept the Offer:

When a bed becomes available at one of the selected long term care homes, you will receive a phone call from your Case Manager at Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) to offer the bed. You must decide if you want to accept the bed offer within 24 hours. You can take up to five days to move into the long term care home, and bed-holding fees may be charged.

After you accept the offer of the bed, as much of the paperwork and other information you can provide ahead of time (including the **Personal Care Book** with your family member's life story), will help the Care Team to prepare for the arrival of your family member.

Review the **Personal Care Book** and make any changes and add more valuable information to share with the Care Team on the day of the move (for example, topics of conversation, suggestions for giving reassurance, preferred routine, likes and dislikes) Remember, this will help the staff at the home get to know your family member more quickly and help them settle in Providing this information as early as possible may also save everyone time in gathering the information later on, and will also free up more time for you on the Move Day to spend with your family member.

After you accept the offer:

Call the people in your circle of support to assist you with the details and to support you with the emotions related to the move.

Confirm transportation arrangements and the person who will accompany you during the move.

Determine the date and time of arrival at the new home and the name of the person from the home who will meet you there. It is usual for the home to want your family member to arrive before lunch. This gives them more time to adjust to the new setting on the first day.

Consider arranging to have someone meet you after the move to provide support.

3. The Day of the Move:

What to take with you:

- The Personal Care Book** – If you did not give it to the Care Team ahead of time.
- A list of clothing, belongings and assistive devices.
- Copies of all of the completed legal and financial documents.
- Your family member’s calendar of upcoming appointments.
- All of your family member’s current medication in the original labeled containers.
- Advance care choices or copy of your family member’s wishes for medical interventions if they put these in writing previously.

Other:

When the move is finished, contact the person or people in your circle of support. Move Day can be physically and emotional tiring. It is common for caregivers and family members to experience a sense of loss with this change. Taking time for yourself right after the move is good for your health and will help you adjust to the many changes.

To help prepare you for your first meeting with the Care Team, here are some questions you can think about in advance:

P – Physical Health – Medical history and current health problems, such as walking, eyesight, hearing, sleep

I – Intellectual Abilities – The skills and problems your family member has with thinking, time/date/where they are, memory, speech, problem solving, decision-making

E – Emotional well-being –Are there strong feelings about certain life events or losses that may come up because of the move. For example, past memories (happy or sad) may be triggered by music, photographs, or receiving personal care

C – Capabilities – How much and what kind of help does your family member need with activities of daily living? For example, bathing, grooming, dressing

E – Environment – What will help make the new surroundings more comfortable for your family member? Have you noticed if there is anything in the home that might upset your family member? e.g. certain noises, lighting

S – Social –**The Personal Care Book or life story will describe your family member’s likes, dislikes, joyful as well as sad memories and, life accomplishments. Refer to page 5.**

4. In the Days and Weeks Following the Move:

In approximately six weeks a Care Conference will be held to bring family together with other members of the Care Team to share valuable information. This is another opportunity for you to share information about the Life Story.

Write down your questions and concerns and take them with you to the Care Conference. Both you and the staff can talk about any changes you notice because your family member is adjusting to the move.

Other things to consider doing:

Address any other details that have not been done yet e.g. items that were not moved to the home, canceling utilities, and change of address notices.

Consider sending out change of address cards to family and friends and let them know that they are welcome to visit

Think about getting involved in the home's family council. Adjusting to your new role and so many changes takes time. Talking with another family member who has also gone through a move, can be very helpful.

It is important to talk to and with staff. Find out who to contact on the Care Team if you have questions or concerns.

Your Thoughts:
